

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES



RON CROSS
Commission Chairman

When you come to the end of a road whether it be a childhood road, a school road, a job road, a career road, or a political office road, certain things remain in your mind that define that road. And as Yogi says, "when you come to a fork in the road, take it."

For many years, the late comedian/actor Bob Hope ended his many shows and especially his time entertaining our military all over the world with his memories of the event set to music. Well, we can, for the benefit of us all, omit the music part. However, below is a brief summary of my thanks and gratitude for people and events in my sixteen years of serving as County-Wide Elected Chairman of the Columbia County Board of Commissioners.

THANKS: To the voters of Columbia County who saw fit to elect me for four straight terms; to voters that have supported all of our SPLOST programs for capital improvements; to the voters in the region that supported the TIA aka T-SPLOST for road improvements; to the voters that approved our General Obligation Bonds that allowed the construction of the Performing Arts Center and other improvements; and to the general public that has supported Evans Towne Center Park and our dream of an Evans Towne Center; to the citizens who suffered through many traffic delays in getting to where we are in road improvements. Special thanks to Ashley Campbell White. As I recall, she was the only media person who would verify a story before broadcasting or printing it.

THANKS: To special people like the late George Deuhning, Phil Alexander, Clay Whittle, Jean Garniewicz, Jan Wiggins, Glenda Metts, Charles Sharpe, Oliver Owens, Tim Tyler, Judy Brown, and many others who were always supportive no matter how much noise was made by the naysayers. They always took time to write notes and/or visit. Another special thanks to Ron Thigpen. His experience on the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Development Authority, and being a Banker made being Chairman easy for me. He needs to be back in office.

THANKS: To the special elected officials of Columbia County Government; Sheriff Clay Whittle and his staff; Juvenile Court Judge Doug Flanagan; all the Superior court Judges; the late Probate Court Judge Pat Hardaway, and the current Probate court Judge Alice Padgett; Coroner Vernon Collins; Tax Commissioner Wayne Bridges, and Magistrate Judge Jason Troiano. These people bring a true professionalism to their positions and it was an honor to serve with them.

THANKS: To administration staff; Deputy Administrators Matt Schlachter and Col. Glenn Kennedy. Extremely talented people who are probably the two best support staffers in

the country; Commission Clerk Patrice Crawley, PR Manager Cassidy Harris and the go-to lady/Executive Assistant/Office Manager/gitter-done guru, Janeabeth Wells. These ladies can handle any task including the commissioners. Past women in the office also did an amazing job; Calie Cook, Deanna Brooks, Gina Gordon, and Lily Baker.

To Steve Cassell; great traffic mind who has helped traffic flows across the county with innovative traffic solutions.

To all the nice people in our HR Department for keeping salaries, insurance, retirement, time-off, and many other things for a whole lot of employees.

Special thanks to Administrator Scott Johnson and previous Administrator Steve Szablewski. Steve set a high standard for almost twenty years, and Scott Johnson exceeded it. No one has a broader knowledge of government operations than Scott. His knowledge of management procedures, legal issues, financial matters, SPLOST programs, capital improvements, and personnel administration is unparalleled. My vote for Columbia County Government MVP would be for Scott. Well, maybe for Sheriff Whittle also.

Another special thanks to the folks at Roads and Bridges; Tim Holloway, Mike Whittaker, and the entire crew. When something needed to be done that was out of the ordinary or was a rush, one call and this group, along with Matt Schlachter, would get it done. Most could probably make more money in the private sector but I was sure glad on many occasions that they choose to work for the county.

Another special thanks to EMA Director Andy Leanza, Chief Jeremy Wallen, and the late Chief Doug Cooper. These folks along with the Sheriff's personnel and roads and bridges help reduce the effects of a severe weather events tremendously. Their cooperative spirit and willingness to perform regardless of who gets the credit is delightful to watch. Being an observer in the emergency management center and watching them work is a pleasure. And of course, Doug Cooper was an important part in consolidating the previous volunteer fire departments and later establishing the current Columbia County Fire Rescue.

THANKS: To all of the people of outside agencies that are an important part of our community; the CSRA Alliance, began initially to avoid any downsizing and/or closure of Fort Gordon but developed into a promoter of the Fort Gordon Cyber District. Thanks to Col. Thom Tuckey, Sgt. Major Tom Clark, and the Alliance members. I was honored to be a founding member after the late Congressman Charlie Norwood said we needed such an organization to support our military installation.

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The TIA Roundtable and Executive Committee: This group that I had the pleasure of chairing put together the list of projects for the T-SPLOST. Great community leaders from many counties working together for the region.

The Georgia Public Defender Council: Again, it was my honor to chair this group for many years that focused on people who could not afford to defend themselves in court. The Council is an important part of our Constitution made up of Judges, Attorneys, and a couple of county commissioners. I learned a lot more from this group than I contributed.

The Savannah Upper-Ogeechee Water Council: Once again I was elected chairman of this group that was created by the General Assembly to establish the state water plan. The first was completed in 2010 and updated five years later as required by the legislation. The Savannah River Basin is one of our most important natural resources and this important water source must be protected and maintained.

The Governors Energy Council: This group, under Gov. Perdue, completed the state energy plan and made recommendations pertaining to energy sources and pollution control. The major items were control of fossil fuel productions and encouraging solar, wind, and nuclear power production.

The Augusta Region Transportation Study (ARTS): This group comprised of officials from Columbia, Richmond, and Aiken Counties sets the road program for this region. Any project must be originated and/or approved by this group before it will be considered by the GDOT. My chairmanship of many years saw many road improvements, large and small, in our region.

Thanks to all the many people that served on the above committees and thanks for the knowledge and expertise that you contributed.

THANKS: The most important thanks, in this long list of thanks, is to my family; Jan, my lovely wife of 54 years, Kelley, my

Daughter, Mike, my son-in-law, and my Grandson Noah.

It is the family of a political figure that feels the hurt of comments made about their loved one the most, but that is part of being a public official. They know that most comments are from uninformed sources, and that most are not true, but they are limited in how they can respond. Usually the best response is no response since you cannot win an argument with ignorance.

The most important element of being in politics is to have strong family support, and I have had an abundance of that. Special thanks to Jan who sat through almost all of the commission meetings. Some were entertaining, but most were probably boring.

And to the many commissioners that have been on the commission with me for the past 16 years:

For those that agreed with me; Thank You!

For those that disagreed with me; Thank You.

For those that were not engaged enough to understand any issue; Find another job!

For the new chairman and the new commissioners; keep the vision alive, form your own, and leave the county better than you found it. Great project funding and plans from the past will keep the momentum going for a while, but time will come when new ideas, funding sources, and vision are necessary.

Finally, thanks to the good people of Columbia County. We are blessed with a great county, and I am sure it will continue to be great. Apologies to all the good people who were not mentioned, and I am sure there were many. It has been my honor to serve as your county chairman.

May God continue to bless this nation, this state, Columbia County, and each of us.

Look what's coming up at Evans Towne Center Park!



Thursdays from
March-November



Enjoy a movie on the lawn the
2nd Saturday of each month



Enjoy music by Zac Brown
Band, Midland, & MORE!



Hunt for eggs and take
your picture with the
Easter Bunny on April
20th!



It's Fiesta time! Come
celebrate Cinco de Mayo a
day early on May 4th



Outdoor music
under the stars!
May 11 & June 1



BOOM! in the Park is
coming back to ETCP on
Thursday, July 4th

Visit evanstownecenterpark.com for more info

Adult Programs

Columbia County/Evans Library

English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes

Tuesdays • 10:30 am-12:00 pm

Classes are free and open to adults whose first language is not English. There will be no class on January 1.

Doodle Hour-Adult Coloring

Wed, Jan 2 • 12:00 pm & Mon, Jan 7 • 6:30 pm

Coloring books are perfect for stressed out adults. You've seen the trend, now try it!

Adult Walk-In Guitar Lessons

Thursdays, January 3 & 17 • 4:00 pm

Always wanted to play guitar? Come for free basic lessons for adults every first and third Thursday from 4:00 to 5:00. No registration necessary. Call 706-447-7667 for more info.

Fiber Arts Craft & Chat

Thursdays, January 3 & 17 • 5:30-7:30 pm

This group meets the first and third Thursday of each month in the café area and is open to all crafters: crochet, knit, loom, cross stitch, etc. This low-key crafting meet-up is open to people who want to learn as well as those already crafty.

Adult Guitar Club

Thursdays, January 3 & 17 • 6:00-7:30 pm

Experienced adult players, this is a chance to get together with other adult guitar players to swap tips and songs.

Canasta Club

Thursdays, January 10 & 24 • 1:30-3:30 pm

Come join this card playing group on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at 1:30 pm in the upstairs classroom.

Genealogy 101

Friday, January 11 • 10:00 am

Learn the basics of family research. Find out what to look for, where to find it, and how to organize it. Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

Estate Planning & Elder Care

Friday, January 11 • 11:00 am

Hear legal strategies to protect your family and estate including: wills & trusts, estate planning, probate avoidance, powers of attorney, Medicaid and VA planning as well as the VA Aid & Attendance Benefit. Burroughs + Elijah hosts. Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

Genealogy Club

Monday, January 14 • 3:00 pm

Whether you're a genealogical expert or just learning about your roots, this is the group for you.

Pub Fiction Book Club

Monday, January 14 • 7:00 pm • Pizza Central, Evans

Join us at Pizza Central in Evans for this month's book selection: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis.

VA Benefits for Long Term Care

Wednesday, January 16 • 11:00 am

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides tax free monetary benefits to eligible veterans and widow(er)s of veterans who are spending money out of pocket for medical expenses. Learn about the update to the new VA eligibility rules, and estate planning and elder care planning. Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

Brown Bag Book Discussion

Thursday, January 17 • 11:30 am-1:00 pm

This lunchtime book club meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 11:30 am in the downstairs Meeting Room. Call 706-863-1946 ext 4 for details about the January book discussion.

Gadget Help with Alex

Thursday, January 17 • 1:30-3:30 pm

Drop by the Library during these times to get individual help with your electronic gadgets. First come, first serve; no appointment necessary.

Cord Cutting

Thursday, January 17 • 5:30-7:30 pm

Learn the basics of cord cutting. Gain information on the latest options such as Hulu, Sling TV, Roku, antennas, etc. that will allow you to ditch that monthly cable bill! Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

FirstOneStep07

Thursday, January 17 • 6:00 pm

Support group for new amputees and their family members to connect with others who have overcome similar challenges.

Monday Night Book Discussion

Monday, January 21 • 6:30 pm

This month's book selection is *Sleepwalker* by Chris Bohjalian. Monday Night Book Discussion will meet at Pizza Central this month.

Makerspace Die Cutting

Thursday, January 24 • 5:30-7:30 pm

Did you get a Cricut or Silhouette Cameo as a gift? Come learn and share ideas for using die cut machines. Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

Euchee Creek Library

Beginner Crochet

Wednesday, January 2 & 16 • 1:30 pm

Fun and informal. Supplies provided. No registration required.

Fiber Arts Craft & Chat

Wednesday, January 9 • 2:00 pm

Bring your own projects - crochet, knit, loom, cross stitch, etc. and socialize with others.

Sewing for Beginners

Thursday, January 10 • 10:30 am-12:00 pm

Class for learning basic sewing skills. This month's project is TBA. Call 706-556-0594 for details and registration.

Columbia County Genealogical Society

Thursday, January 10 • 1:00 pm

Genealogy club for all ages. No registration required.

Adult Time Out

Thursday, January 17 • 11:00 am

Take a much-needed "time out" and make a craft! This month's craft project is TBA. Call 706-556-0594 for details.

On The Same Page Bookclub

Thursday, January 24 • 10:30 am

Read a book - talk about it! Book selection TBA. Call 706-556-0594 for details.

ALL COLUMBIA COUNTY LIBRARIES WILL CLOSE AT 5 P.M. MONDAY, DECEMBER 31, AND REMAIN CLOSED TUESDAY, JANUARY 1 IN CELEBRATION OF NEW YEAR'S DAY. LIBRARIES WILL ALSO BE CLOSED SATURDAY, JANUARY 19 THROUGH MONDAY JANUARY 21 IN HONOR OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY.

Harlem Library

Doodle Hour

Monday, January 7 • 2:00 pm

Join us for an enjoyable hour of coloring and relaxing!

Open Sewing

Tuesdays, January 8 & 27 • 3:00 pm

Bring your projects and use our machines to finish them!

Registration required.

Crochet Class

Thursday, January 10 & 24 • 10:30 am

Join us for a fun hour of crocheting! This class is in 2 sessions, and you must register for both.

Crafternoon

Wednesday, January 16 • 1:00 pm

Join us for a fun hour of crafting! Call 706-650-5009 to register.

Harlem Book Club

Thursday, January 17 • 4:00 pm

Join us for book club! Please call the library at 706-650-5009 for a list of selections.

Bingo for Books

Friday, January 18 • 10:00 am

Join us for Bingo, prizes, and refreshments! Registration required.

Teen Programs

Columbia County/Evans Library

Young Makers Program

Monday, January 7 • 4:00-5:30 pm

This Makerspace program is geared especially for children ages 8-12. Kids will learn about science, engineering, and design with hands-on experiences.

Beginner's Guitar Class

Tuesday, January 8 • 4:00 pm

This guitar class is for ages 11-18. If you do not have your own guitar, we have up to 6 guitars for class use. Registered students can drop in any time from 4:00-5:00 pm for instruction. Call 706-863-1946 ext 4 to register.

Otaku-Rabu Club

Tuesday, January 8 • 5:00-6:30 pm

Join us for a screening of this season's most popular anime!

Beginner Coding Class

Tuesday, January 15 • 4:00 pm

We will be teaching the basics of coding in Java. Call 706-863-1946 ext 4 to register.

Makerspace

Thursday, January 24 • 4:00-5:30 pm

Teens 13-18 will work on their own projects under staff guidance while using library equipment.

Teen Guitar Club

Tuesday, January 22 • 4:00 pm

Meet to discuss and share guitar tips, techniques, advice, etc. Ages 11 to 18.

Teen Advisory Board

Thursday, January 31 • 4:00 pm

Help us decide what programs to offer this year while getting volunteer credit.

Euchee Creek Library

Minecraft Club

Saturday, January 12 • 11:00 am-1:00 pm

Bring your own device or laptop with Minecraft already loaded.

Graphic Novel Group

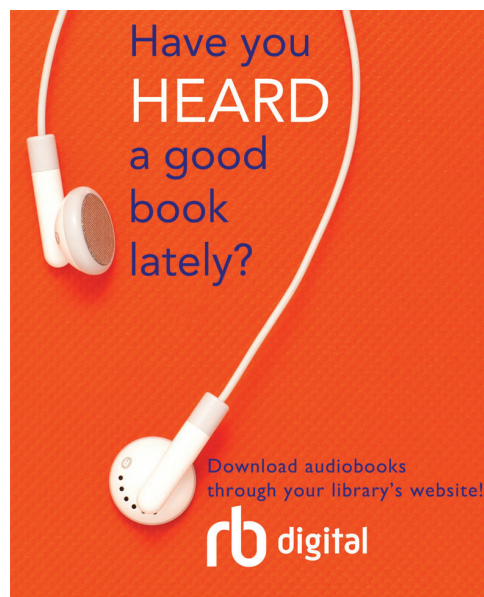
Tuesday, January 22 • 4:30 pm

Graphic novel club for teens. Bring a favorite GN to discuss, and learn how to make a graphic novel! No registration required.

TEEN Sushi Roll

Saturday, January 26 • 12:30 pm

TEENS!! Learn to make a simple vegetable sushi roll (and enjoy the fruits of your labor)! Registration required.



Winter Reading Events for Teens & Adults

Columbia County/Evans Library

Harry Potter Movie Series

Thursdays through January 24 • 5:30 pm

Join us to view an installment of the Harry Potter movie series each week.

Dress Like a Wizard Day

Thursday, January 3 • all day

Visit the library dressed as your favorite magical folk! Any and all magical fandoms welcome.

Magical Crafternoon

Wednesday, January 9 • 3:30-5:00 pm

Join us to make your choice of a dragon egg or lava lamp. Ages 11 and up. Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

A Night with Beedle the Bard: A Reading of Selected Tales

Tuesday, January 15 • 6:00 pm

Join us for this reading of selected tales from J. K. Rowling's *Tales of Beedle the Bard*. All ages are welcome - children, teens, and adults. Light refreshments provided.

Potions Class - Libraries are Magic

Tuesday, January 29 • 6:00 pm

Ages 11 – adult. Visit us in the downstairs meeting room and brew and sample tasty potions. Call 706-863-1946, ext. 4 to register.

Children's & Family Programs

Columbia County/Evans Library

Child Enrichment resumes January 28:

- Crawlers & Pre-Walkers: Tues • 10:15 am*
- Baby & Me: Tues • 11:00 am*
- Baby & Me: Wed • 10:15 am*
- Baby & Me: Wed • 11:00 am*
- Two-nders: Mon, Wed, Thur • 10:15 am
- Preschoolers: Mon, Wed, Thur • 11:00 am
- Afternoon Adventures: Thur • 4:30 pm

Programs marked with * require registration. Call 706-863-1946 ext 3 for information or to register for children's programs.

Dress Like a Wizard Day

Thursday, January 3 • all day
Visit the library dressed as your favorite magical folk! Any and all magical fandoms welcome.

Night with Beedle the Bard: A Reading of Selected Tales

Tuesday, January 15 • 6:00 pm
Join us for this reading of selected tales from J. K. Rowling's *Tales of Beedle the Bard*. All ages are welcome - children, teens, and adults. Light refreshments provided.

Potions Class

Tuesday, January 29 • 6:00 pm
Celebrate Harry Potter by learning the art and science of brewing potions! Registration will be opened January 15.

Euchee Creek Library

Child Enrichment resumes January 29:

- Baby & Me: Tues • 10:30 am
- Child Enrichment: Tues • 4:15 pm
- Child Enrichment: Weds • 10:30 am

Super Novas Club

Monday, January 7 • 4:30 pm
Make your own crystal snowflake! Bring a wide mouth glass or plastic jar with a lid. Grades 2-5.

Family Movie Night

Monday, January 14 • 5:30 pm
This month's movie is *Incredibles 2*. Light snacks and no registration required.

Harlem Library

Child Enrichment:

- Tuesdays January 11 & 18 • 10:30 am

Craft Make 'N' Take

Monday, January 7 • 12:00-3:00 pm
Come by the library and make a craft or pick one up to take home! While supplies last.

Libraries are Magic

December 4 - February 1

Harry Potter Movie Series

Thursdays through Jan. 24 • 5:30 pm • Hardin Auditorium
Enjoy a Harry Potter movie each week on the big screen! Children, teens, and adults welcome.

Dress Like a Wizard Day

Thursday, January 3 • All Day
All magical fandoms welcome. Children, teens, and adults welcome.

Magical Crafternoon

Wednesday, Jan. 9 • 3:30-5:00 pm • Downstairs meeting room
Make a lava lamp or dragon egg. Ages 11 through adult.

Night with Beedle the Bard: A Reading of Selected Tales

Tuesday, Jan. 15 • 6:00 pm • Classroom B/C
Hear selected tales of *Beedle the Bard*. Children, teens, and adults welcome.

Potions Class

Tuesday, Jan. 29 • 6:00 pm • Location varies by age • Registration required
Ages 6-10: Cafe area. Ages 11-adult: Downstairs meeting room.
Brew and sample tasty potions.

Read for one hour or attend a library program to complete each week's challenge. Complete a minimum of 5 weekly challenges to complete the program and earn pins and a canvas tote bag.

See a library staff member for details.



Winter Reading 2018

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE

Friends of the Library Book Sale

COLUMBIA COUNTY LIBRARY LOBBY
7022 EVANS TOWN CENTER BLVD, EVANS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1: 10AM-4:45 PM
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2: 10AM-4:45 PM
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3: 2PM-4:45 PM
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4: 10AM-5PM

Find rare books, great deals, and something for everyone in your family.

FLOOD PROTECTION

KNOW YOUR FLOOD HAZARD INSURE YOUR PROPERTY

Information is available on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), flood zones, flood insurance, elevation certificates, floodway data, approx. depth of flooding, natural floodplain functions, wetland data and other related items.

Columbia County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, which dictates minimum standards to be adopted and enforced at the local government level. If you

don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, because Columbia County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This information is backed by the Federal Government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have flooded.

Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Public Library and the Engineering and Environmental Services Department in Building A of the Columbia County Government Complex OR you can contact Connie Smith at (706) 312-7247 or clsmith@columbiacountyga.gov to use this free service.



COLUMBIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S CORNER

IRS TELEPHONE SCAMS

The IRS has seen a recent increase in local phone scams across the country, with callers pretending to be from the IRS in hopes of stealing money or identities from victims.

These phone scams include many variations, ranging from instances from where callers say the victims owe money or are entitled to a huge refund. Some calls can threaten arrest and threaten a driver's license revocation. Sometimes these calls are paired with follow-up calls from people saying they are from the local police department or the state motor vehicle department.

Characteristics of these scams can include:

- Scammers use fake names and IRS badge numbers. They generally use common names and surnames to identify themselves.
- Scammers may be able to recite the last four digits of a victim's Social Security Number.
- Scammers "spoof" or imitate the IRS toll-free number on caller ID to make it appear that it's the IRS calling.
- Scammers sometimes send bogus IRS emails to some victims to support their bogus calls.
- Victims hear background noise of other calls being conducted to mimic a call site.

After threatening victims with jail time or a driver's license revocation, scammers hang up and others soon call back pretending to be from the local police or DMV, and the caller ID supports their claim.

In another variation, one sophisticated phone scam has targeted taxpayers, including recent immigrants, throughout the country. Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire

transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are then threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, here's what you should do: If you know you owe taxes or you think you might owe taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040. The IRS employees at that line can help you with a payment issue – if there really is such an issue.

It is important to keep in mind the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email or phone to request personal or financial information. **DO NOT** give out any personal or financial information by any type of electronic communication, such as text messages, social media channels, and e-mail.

The IRS will not:

- Call you to demand immediate payment. The IRS will not call you if you owe taxes without first sending you a bill in the mail.
- Demand that you pay taxes and not allow you to question or appeal the amount you owe.
- Require that you pay your taxes a certain way. For instance, require that you pay with a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for your credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to bring in police or other agencies to arrest you for not paying.

